

THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN.

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MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERIAN SECESSION SYNOD.

THE annual meeting of this body took place on Tuesday, the 5th July, in the Rev. Professor Edgar's Meeting-house, Alfred Street, Belfast. The Moderator for the last year, the Rev. James Porter, Drumlee, commenced the proceedings with an excellent discourse from Acts xv. 28, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." From this subject the preacher exhibited in a powerful and luminous manner—I. The duty of Gospel ministers with regard to themselves. In the illustration of this, two points were mainly insisted on. 1. The duty of ministers in reference to the state of their own souls. Some judicious and pertinent remarks on this point were concluded with directing the attention of the fathers and brethren to a Synodical Sermon published some years since, by Rev. John Coulter, in which the same subject is ably and faithfully pressed home on the conscience. 2. Ministers must take heed to their judicial acts, as these affect both pastor and people. The caution enforced by the preacher, as it regarded the ministry of the church, embraced "*admission to the sacred office,*" and "*continuance in the sacred office.*" The door of admission, it was shown, must be strictly guarded, lest wolves in sheep's clothing enter in and devour the flock; and a vigilant inspection must also be maintained, for the purpose of discovering and driving from the fold such as may, at their entrance, have escaped detection. 3. Ministers were urged to fidelity in the spirit of their divine Master, avoiding illiberal and sectarian views, and doing all to the glory of God, and the purity, peace, and stability of his church.

II. The second topic embraced the duty of ministers to their flocks. 1. Feed them with sound scriptural instruction. Labour to fill their minds with a knowledge of the doctrines of Revelation, and their hearts with love to the author of these doctrines. 2. Be diligent to increase the number of the flock, not by making predatory aggressions on other Christian churches, but by seeking to win those who are ignorant and out of the way—not by raising false alarms in the minds of the people, but by warning them against the cares of the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the wiles of the devil. These considerations were enforced by arguments at once cogent and felicitous.

III. In the third division, motives were adduced for the conscientious discharge of this two-fold duty. Even worldly respectability, not to speak of subsistence itself, demanded it. But the arguments on which the preacher mainly dwelt, were the *minister's personal salvation* and the *salvation of his hearers*. These stirring motives he held forth in their true importance: these he earnestly, and we trust successfully, pressed on the attention of all ministers present. In the conclusion of his discourse, Mr. Porter called on his fathers and brethren not to be negligent of the Christianizing movements which are going on around them; and he noticed favourably the evangelical labours of the Home Mission of a portion of the Established Church, and the exertions of the Synod of Ulster, particularly those directed to the anxious guardianship over intrants to the office of the ministry. In connexion with these, he alluded, in terms of high commendation, to the change which the Temperance reformation has already effected, confidently anticipating a still wider extension of its blessings. The necessity of a converted ministry to the future efficiency of the Presbyterian Secession Church, was stated briefly but ably, and in a way which, we doubt not, left deep impressions of its importance upon the minds of the auditory.

At the close of the sermon the roll was called, when a considerable number of ministers and elders answered to their names; after which the Rev. James Crawford, Derry, was chosen Moderator for the ensuing year. On ascending the pulpit, Mr. Crawford thanked his brethren for the honour they had conferred on him, and announced his determination to discharge the duties of the office with justice and impartiality.

The evening session of Tuesday, as usual, and the mornings of the subsequent days from six till seven o'clock, were devoted to the exercises of prayer and praise. The influence of such exercises is invaluable in calming the feelings, and preserving on

the mind that solemnity which has been too frequently banished from Synodical meetings.

On Wednesday the Synod was chiefly occupied with the reports of Presbyteries, several of them involving matters of much interest to the body at large; but as our space is limited, we shall confine our notices to the Missionary proceedings, which engaged the attention of Synod on Thursday, and the subject of the Moral Philosophy class in the Royal Belfast College, which was the main topic of public discussion on Friday.

On Thursday, at ten o'clock, according to a rule of Synod, the Report of the Home Mission was brought up by the Rev. Messrs. Moffat, Saintfield, and Wilson, Belfast, the Secretaries for the last year. This interesting document furnished an enumeration of the different stations at present under the superintendence of the Committee, with encouraging details respecting the state of religion in each, and of the prospects which they severally hold out to future exertion. Several additions had been made to the Missionary stations which Synod had formerly recognised, and many of which had been erected into separate and flourishing congregations. Dublin and Belfast were stated to be among the most important posts which the Committee had occupied during the past year. In pursuance of a recommendation urged on Synod at different periods, and particularly in Moneymore, in 1834, by the Rev. David Stuart, Dublin, it was resolved by the Committee, so soon as they obtained adequate funds, to commence operations in the metropolis. And though, as Mr. Stuart stated to them, they had necessarily allowed a more favourable opportunity to pass by, yet the success has not disappointed their most sanguine expectations. In September last, the first Missionaries from our church, Rev. Messrs. Rentoul, Garvagh, and Hunter, Ahory, proceeded to Dublin. These were followed by Mr. Moffat, Saintfield; Mr. Weir, Newry; Mr. Wilson, Belfast; Professor Edgar, Belfast; Mr. R. Moorhead, Loughaghy; Mr. D. Edgar, Ballinahinch; Mr. J. Rogers, Glascar; Mr. Brown, Magheragall; Mr. Wilson, Dunbo. Under the fostering care of the Mission, a congregation has been formed in Dublin, from which a petition was forwarded to Synod, praying to be recognised by the body, and that such steps as might be deemed wise should be taken with a view to the settlement of a fixed pastor over the congregation. George Mathews, Esq., and Doctor Herron appeared as commissioners in support of the prayer of the petition. From the statements submitted to the house by these gentlemen, as well

as by various members of Synod, and from other communications, it appeared that the adherents of our cause evince much anxiety to be recognised by Synod; and that the *Regium Donum* formerly belonging to Mass Lane had been transferred to this new congregation, on the recommendation of the Mission Committee. The Secretaries were asked to explain the reason of this recommendation, which they did to the satisfaction of the Synod, and the house felt much interest in the statements which were submitted to it by the commissioners. At a subsequent stage of the proceedings, the prayer of the Dublin petition was granted, and the congregation accordingly recognised and placed under the care of the Down Presbytery. The steady onward course adopted by the Committee in this matter, and the zeal and activity of their Missionary agents, have mainly contributed, under the divine blessing, to the success which promises at no distant date to crown the labours of the Synod in Dublin. The commissioners, also, and others connected with the infant congregation, have evinced a zeal and activity which are above all praise.

During the last year, arrangements were entered into by the committee for carrying on missionary operations with greater vigour in Belfast. At a large meeting, held in the end of January, a resolution was received from the Presbytery of Down, recommending the appointment of an agent, whose time and exertions should be entirely devoted to the business of the mission. The subject being maturely considered, it was finally and unanimously agreed, "That the Rev. Joseph Weir Hunter be requested to accept the office of agent to the mission; his duties to be to live and work in Belfast, with the ulterior object of forming a new congregation there; to act as Assistant Secretary to the Mission, and to travel as circumstances may require for the establishment and keeping up of auxiliaries, the opening of new stations, the supply of pulpits, whose ministers are engaged on the mission, and the promotion of the general objects of the society with his whole energies." "In connexion with this decisive step, the meeting-house hitherto occupied by the Alfred-street congregation, which had been offered to the mission for a very moderate sum, was purchased, in the hope that through Mr. Hunter's labours, encouraged and assisted by the conductors of the mission, it will become the seat of a third Secession congregation in Belfast." So anxious were Professor Edgar and his congregation for the promotion of the above object, that they made a considerable sacrifice in the disposal of the house, for which they re-

ceived a cordial vote of thanks from the Mission Committee. Mr. Wilson being called on to explain to the synod the grounds of this arrangement, entered into a statement of the moral and religious destitution of Belfast—gave some examples of the extreme ignorance of God which prevails among great masses of the population—informed the house that heathenism, dense and dark, covered many of the streets and lanes of the capital of Presbyterian Ulster—and contended that there was no reason why Belfast should be excluded from the sphere of missionary labour. He was followed by Rev. Messrs. Moffat and Professor Edgar, with statements lucid and powerful, which produced a deep impression on all present. Mr. Stuart of Dublin expressed satisfaction with the arrangements of the committee respecting Belfast, and, in an excellent speech, directed their attention also to the South and West. Some of the elders at this stage publicly stated the delight with which they had listened to the whole of the missionary proceedings; and, to use the words of a public journal, “After a good deal of conversational discussion, in which Messrs. Wilson, Moffat, M’Millen, Stuart, Professor Edgar, &c., took a part, the arrangement alluded to was confirmed by the Synod, and thanks were returned to the committee of the home mission for the zeal and efficiency with which they had discharged their duties.

We trust that a new era has arrived in the missions of the Presbyterian Secession Church. That body which was foremost in commencing missionary operations in Ireland—that body which, by the divine blessing, has maintained so much unanimity in holding the doctrines of orthodoxy—that body which has been so instrumental, under God, in preventing the spread of heresy through the length and breadth of Ulster—that body is now taking its proper stand as a missionary association, and extending more widely the doctrine, discipline, and devotion of our Presbyterian ancestors. Let us feel our responsibilities as a church, and uniting with heart and mind and vigorous effort, let us onward in the glorious work, trusting in God, the God of our salvation.

We are obliged to hold over the proceedings in reference to the Moral Philosophy Class for our next number. This is not, however, to be regretted, as the negotiations between the synod and the college have not yet closed.

The next regular meeting of synod will take place in Professor Edgar’s meeting-house, Alfred-street, on the first Tuesday in July, 1837; and an adjourned meeting will be held in Armagh on the *third* Tuesday in August, the present month, to con-

sider, among other matters, the proceedings of the committee of superintendence and education, in the examination of young men for admission to the Divinity Hall. As this subject has already given rise to much discussion and some pamphleteering, and as it is deeply important to the interests of the Secession Church, it is hoped that there will be a numerous muster of ministers and elders on the occasion.

A REPORTER.

SLAVERY IN AMERICA.

MANY of our readers are aware of the discussion which lately took place in the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw's church, Glasgow, on the subject of Slavery in America, between Mr. Thomson, Agent for the Anti-Slavery Society, and the Rev. Mr. Breckenridge, an American minister. Previously to Mr. Breckenridge's entering the ministry, he practised as an attorney; and certainly his display in Dr. Wardlaw's did no small credit to his pettifoggish powers. In cool sophistry and self-possession, as well as personal abuse, he was a fit representative of slave-holding interests; but he was no match for George Thomson, whose manly eloquence and multitudinous facts were truly overpowering. The Anti-Slavery Committee of Glasgow, consisting of many of the most eminent men of the city, conceiving it unwise to pass any judgment on the discussion till after its publication, contented themselves with passing a unanimous resolution, that Mr. Thomson never stood so high in their opinion as he does now.

One of the positions which Mr. Breckenridge laboured with much perverted ingenuity and sophistry to contradict is, that Slavery in America is a national sin. If this matter were not settled before, it, unhappily, is settled with a vengeance now. On the 8th of February last, the American Congress resolved,—“That all the memorials which have been offered, or may hereafter be presented to the House, praying for the abolition of Slavery in the district of Columbia, be referred to a select committee with instructions to report.” “That, in the opinion of this House, Congress ought not to interfere in any way with Slavery in the district of Columbia, because it would be a violation of public faith, unwise, impolitic, and dangerous to the Union. Assigning such reasons for these conclusions as, in the judgment of Committee, may be best calculated to enlighten the public mind, to allay excitement,

to repress agitation, to secure and maintain the just rights of the slave-holding States, and of the people of the district, and to restore harmony and tranquillity among the various sections of the Union."

Let a single extract from the Report of this Committee speak for itself:—

Admitting that the Federal Government had a right to act upon this matter, which it clearly has not, it certainly never could achieve such an operation without full compensation to the owners. And what would probably be the amount required? The aggregate value of all that species of property is not less probably than four hundred millions of dollars. And how could such an amount be raised? Will the people of this country ever consent to the imposition of oppressive taxes, that the proceeds may be applied to the purchase of slaves? The idea is preposterous; and not only that, but it is susceptible of demonstration, that even if an annual appropriation of ten millions were actually applied to the purchase and transportation of slaves, the whole number would not be sensibly diminished at the expiration of half a century, from the natural growth and multiplication of the race. Burthen the Treasury as we might, it would still be an endless expense and an interminable work. And this view of the subject surely is sufficient of itself to prove, that of all the schemes ever projected by fanaticism, the idea of universal emancipation is the most visionary and impracticable.

But even if the scheme were practicable, what would be gained by effecting it? Suppose that Congress could emancipate all the slaves in the Union, is such a result desirable? This question is addressed to the sober sense of the people of America. Would it be politic or advantageous? Would it contribute to the wealth, or grandeur, or happiness of our country? On the contrary, would it not produce consequences directly the reverse? Are not the slaves unfit for freedom; notoriously ignorant, servile and depraved? and would any rational man have them instantaneously transformed into freemen, with all the rights and privileges of American citizens? Are they capable of understanding correctly the nature of our Government, or exercising judiciously a single political right or privilege. Nay, would they even be capable of earning their own livelihood, or rearing their families independently by their own ingenuity and industry! What then would follow from their liberation, but the most deplorable state of society with which any civilized country was ever cursed? How would vice and immorality, and licentiousness, overrun the land? How many jails and penitentiaries that now seldom hold a prisoner, would be crowded to suffocation? How many fertile fields, that now yield regular and abundant harvests, would lie unoccupied and desolate? How would the foreign commerce of the South decline and disappear? How many thousands of seamen, of whom Southern agriculture is the very life, would be driven for support to foreign countries? And how large a portion of the federal revenue, derived from foreign commodities exchanged for Southern products, would be lost for ever to this Government? And, in addition to all this, what would be the condition of southern society, were all the slaves emancipated? Would the whites consent that the blacks should be placed upon a

full footing of equality with them? Unquestionably not! Either the one class or the other would be forced to emigrate, and, in either case, the whole region of the South would be a scene of poverty and ruin. Or, what is still more probable, the blacks would every where be driven before the whites, as the Indians have been, until they were exterminated from the earth. And surely it is unnecessary to remark, that decay and desolation could not break down the South, without producing a corresponding depression upon the wealth and enterprise of the Northern States. And here let us ask too, what would be the condition of the non-slaveholding States themselves, as regards the blacks? Are they prepared to receive myriads of negroes, and place them upon an equality with the free white labourers and mechanics, who constitute their pride and strength? Will the new States consent that their territory shall be occupied by negroes, instead of the enterprising, intelligent, and patriotic white population, which is daily seeking their borders from other portions of the Union? Shall the yeomanry of those States be surrounded by thousands of such beings, and the white labourer forced into competition and association with them? Are they to enjoy the same civil and political privileges as the free white citizens of the North and West, and to be admitted into the social circle as their friends and companions? Nothing less than all this will constitute perfect freedom, and the principles now maintained by those who advocate emancipation would, if carried out, necessarily produce this state of things. Yet, who believes that it would be tolerated for a moment? Already have laws been passed in several of the non-slaveholding States to exclude free blacks from a settlement within their limits, and a prospect of general and immediate abolition would compel them, in self-defence to resort to a system of measures much more rigorous and effective than any which have yet been adopted. Driven from the South, the blacks would find no place of refuge in the North: and, as before remarked, utter extermination would be the probable, if not the inevitable, fate of the whole race. Where is the citizen then, that can desire such results? Where the American who can contemplate them without emotion? Where the abolitionist that will not pause, in view of the direful consequences of his scheme, both to the whites and the blacks, to the North and the South, and to the whole Union at large.

Your committee deem it their duty to say that, in their opinion, the people of the South have been very unjustly censured in reference to slavery. It is not their purpose, however, to defend them. Their character, as men and citizens, needs no vindication from us. Wherever it is known it speaks for itself, nor would any wantonly traduce it, but those assassins of reputation, who are also willing to be the destroyers of life. Exaggerated pictures have been drawn of the hardships of the slave, and every effort made to malign the South, and to enlist against it both the religious and political feelings of the North. Your committee cannot too strongly express their unanimous and unqualified disapprobation of all such movements. The constitution under which we live, was framed by our common ancestors to preserve the liberty and independence achieved by their united efforts in the council and in the field. In all our contests with foreign enemies, the South has exhibited an unwavering attachment to the common cause. Where is the spot of which Americans are prouder than the plains of York-town? Or, when was Britain more hum-

bled, or America more honoured, than by the victory of New Orleans? All our history, from the revolution down, attests the high, and uniform, and devoted patriotism of the South. Her domestic institutions are her own. They were brought into the Union with her, and secured by the compact which makes us one people, and he who would sow dissensions among members of the same great political family, by assailing the institutions, and impugning the character of the citizens of the South, should be regarded as an enemy to the peace and prosperity of our common country.

If there is a feature by which the present age may be said to be characterized, it is that sickly sentimentality which, disregarding the pressing claims and wants of its own immediate neighbourhood, or town, or State, wastes and dissipates itself in visionary and often very mischievous enterprises, for the imaginary benefit of remote communities. True philanthropy, rightly understood and properly applied, is one of the purest and most ennobling principles of our nature; but, misdirected or perverted, it degenerates into that fell spirit of fanaticism which disregards all ties, and tramples on all obstacles, however sacred or venerable, in the relentless prosecution of its horrid purposes. Experience proves, however, that, when individuals in one place, mistaking the true character of benevolence, rashly undertake, at the imminent hazard of conflict and convulsion, to remedy what they are pleased to consider evils and distresses in another, it is naturally regarded by those who are thus injured, either as a species of madness which may be repelled or resisted, as any other madness may, or as manifesting a feeling of hostility on the one side, which must necessarily produce corresponding alienation on the other. It is all important, therefore, that the spirit of abolition, or in other words, of illegal and officious interference with the domestic institutions of the South, should be arrested and put down; and men of intelligence and influence at the North should endeavour to produce that sound and rational state of public opinion which is equally due to the South and to the preservation of the Union.

Important as the Union is to each State, and to the whole American people, every one will admit that, as far as possible, strict impartiality and kind feelings to all the interests and all the sections of the country should characterize the action of the Federal Government. The Union was formed for the common and equal benefit of all the States, and for the perfect and equal protection of the rights and interests of all the States. Its only strength is in the confidence of the States, and of the people, that these great benefits will continue to be secured to them, and that these great purposes will be accomplished by its preservation. Any action, therefore, on the part of Congress, which shall weaken or destroy that confidence in any portion of our citizens, or in any State of the Union, must inevitably, to that extent, endanger the Union itself? Who can doubt this reasoning? Who does not know that the agitation of any question connected with domestic slavery, as it exists in this country, among any portion of our citizens, creates apprehension and excitement in the slave-holding States? Who does not know that the agitation of any such question in either branch of Congress, shakes their confidence in the security of their most important interests, and, consequently, in the continuance to them of these great benefits, to secure which they became parties to the Union? Who then does not believe that any

action by Congress, having for its object the abolition of slavery in any portion of the Union, however narrow or limited it may be, would necessarily impair the confidence of the slave-holding States in their security in relation to this description of property, put an end to all their hope of benefits to be derived to them from the further continuance of the Union, and alienate their affections from it? Were Congress, in a single instance, to suffer itself to be impelled by mere feeling in one portion of the Union, to attempt a gratification of that feeling at the sacrifice of the dearest interests and most sacred rights of another portion, who can doubt that the Union would be seriously endangered, if not destroyed. But this conclusion does not depend upon reasoning alone. The evidences of public sentiment on this point, are equally abundant and decisive. Your committee having already extended their report beyond the limits to which they could have wished to confine it, will enter into no details upon this portion of their duty. Suffice it to say that the legislatures of several, if not all, the slave-holding States, have solemnly resolved that "Congress has no constitutional authority to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia." It would be utterly impossible, therefore, that any such attempt should be made by Congress, without producing an excitement, and involving consequences, which no patriot can contemplate without the most painful emotions. It would be regarded by the slave-holding States as an entering wedge to a scheme of general emancipation, and, therefore, tend to produce the same results, in relation to the Federal Government and the Union, that would be produced by the adoption of any measure directly affecting the domestic institutions of the States themselves. Your committee will not dwell upon the picture that is thus presented to their minds. The reflection it excites is one of mingled bitterness and horror. It is one, they trust, which is never to be realized. Looking upon their beloved country, as it now stands, the envy and admiration of the world; contemplating, as they do, that unrivalled constitution, by which a beauteous family of confederated States, each independent in its own separate sphere, revolve around a Federal head with all the harmony and regularity of the planetary system; and knowing as they do, that under the beneficent influence of our free institutions, the people of this country enjoy a degree of liberty, prosperity and happiness, not only unpossessed, but scarcely imagined by any other upon earth; they cannot and will not advert to the horrors, or depict the consequences of that most awful day, when the sun of American freedom shall go down in blood, and nothing remain of this glorious Republic but the bleeding, scattered, and dishonoured fragments. It would, indeed, be the extinction of the world's last hope, and the jubilee of tyranny over all the earth!

If the worst enemy of American slave-holders had been appointed to draw up a report, could he have half so effectually mangled their cause as these same supporters of Slavery have done, in the abominably base, savage, and yet most laughably absurd and bombastic report, of which the foregoing is an extract? The worst, however, by far the worst, is yet to come. This self-same committee had the insolence to disgrace our common humanity by proposing, and to the everlasting disgrace

of the United States of America, a hundred and seventeen out of a hundred and eighty-five members of Congress, confirmed the proposal—"That all petitions, memorials, resolutions, propositions, or papers relating in any way or to any extent whatever, to the subject of Slavery or the abolition, shall, without either being printed or referred, be laid upon the table; and that no further action whatever shall be had thereon." Never in the whole range of history was there a more melancholy or revolting illustration of the adage—*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*. Madmen indeed they are to suppose, that by an act of tyranny which would have disgraced the darkest hour of the dark ages, the human mind is to be enslaved, or the march of truth in the nineteenth century to be stopped. The Congress, however, is not the only body in America resolved on arresting by brute force the progress of inquiry. The delegates from the Southern States at the late meeting of the General Assembly had received orders before leaving home, to walk out of the Assembly with becoming dignity, provided any favourable reception were given to the cause of immediate abolition, and by very many members from all quarters the most strenuous efforts were made to prevent discussion.

During the late meeting of the American Methodist General Conference, two of its members attended a meeting of an Anti-Slavery Society and took part in its proceedings. For this grievous offence, a vote of censure, in very severe terms, was passed against them in Conference, by a vote of 122 to 11. This, however, was a trifle to what followed, for when a motion for reprobating the abolition of Slavery was put, an amendment on this motion was lost by 123 to 14, though the amendment merely proposed to prefix to the resolution the words "Although we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of Slavery"—though these words are, to the very letter, part of the Methodist discipline. No one needs be surprised at such a statement, when he is informed that the Methodist book-agent at New Orleans was likely to be brought before the court to answer to the charge of selling incendiary publications, because he sold Methodist Disciplines, but was saved from it by the interposition of a Presbyterian clergyman, who assured the magistrate that the Methodist Discipline was published several years ago. One or two sentences from a speech of one of the ablest members of the Conference will show the spirit of the Pro-Slavery party in America.

"Mr. Winans said he was born in Pensylvania, and believed a slaveholder to be no better than a horse thief. But he had

since lived among slavery, and had become a slaveholder himself. He believed there should be slaveholders, both ministers and people, in the slaveholding States. He believed the cause of religion was greatly aided by the circumstance that there were slaveholding deacons, and elders, and ministers in the Presbyterian church; and class-leaders, and stewards and preachers, and presiding elders in the Methodist Episcopal church; and for the same reason there should also be slaveholding bishops."

All the efforts of the Pro-slavery party in America to repress the rising spirit of freedom will be utterly unavailing. At May last there were 600 Anti-Slavery Societies in the United States, having an annual income of 25,000 dollars, being 15,000 dollars more than last year. Of the spirit and influence of the last anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society, some idea may be formed from the fact that 21,000 dollars were subscribed at it to the general funds of the Society. A hundred and eighty-five ministers of the Baptist body alone are decided abolitionists, and the Methodist clergy in the central parts of New England have joined the standard of abolition almost in a body.

LITERATURE AND THEOLOGY OF GERMANY.

FOR the last fifty years German scholars and theologians have attracted much public attention. In all the walks of literature men have appeared distinguished for bold and original views, and possessing vast stores of erudition. The political state of Germany has powerfully contributed, with other causes, to force mind into the channels of learning and philosophy. Subjects of political interest, on which feeling and thought expend themselves in Britain, being guarded among the Germans from the unhallowed intrusion of the people at large, safer speculations must be discovered for exercising the ceaseless energies of intellect. Accordingly, with the exception referred to, every department of knowledge, human and divine, has been assiduously and extensively cultivated. The machinery of gymnasia, and seminaries and universities, has been constructed according to the best models which ingenuity could devise, and the general result testifies that a considerable amount of work is accomplished. We do not mean to express approbation of the systems of instruction pursued in Germany, much less to pledge ourselves to the principles, either literary

or religious, which are still in the ascendant among her critics and divines; we merely intend to furnish a few facts, as the ground work of hints which may be serviceable to the youth of our own country, and especially to such as are intended for the holy office of the ministry. A most instructive account of the German colleges and universities, has been published by Professor Robinson, of the Theological Seminary at Andover, America. and reprinted in "The Students' Cabinet Library of Useful Tracts," from which we select his *concise view* of those of Halle and Berlin, as the most distinguished, and as best calculated to furnish a correct notion of the state of the arts and sciences in the great continental emporium of learning.

"Halle has claims of peculiar interest in the history of theology, from the circumstance that it was founded in part, at least, through the influence of the pious Spener in 1694. The first occasion of its foundation was the secession of the jurist Thomasius from Leipsic, with a great number of his pupils, to whom he continued to deliver lectures at Halle. Spener's influence occasioned the appointment of Breithaupt, Anton, and that man of God, Francke, as the first theological professors. Halle therefore became the seat of all Francke's exertions, and of that school of piety and deep religious feeling, which forms an era in the history of the German churches. Nor was there any want of learning, strictly so called. Francke, with all his active duties, was a distinguished biblical scholar for his day; while the name of Thomasius ranks high in the history of German jurisprudence; and the two brothers, I. H. and C. B. Michaelis, as also Cellarius, were certainly not inferior men. The tone of piety, however, began to give way under Baumgarten; and at length the foundations of faith in a divine revelation were undermined by Semler. Nösselt and some others still regarded themselves as orthodox; and within these few years (1825) their contemporary, the venerable Knapp, has closed a long life of unobtrusive, but consistent piety. He stood, however, alone; while rationalism, through the exertions of Wegscheider, the countenance of Gesenius, and the indifference of Niemeyer, had obtained firm footing, and seduced the understandings of the great body of the students.

"The translation of Professor Tholuck from Berlin to Halle, as the successor of Knapp, gave the first occasion for open hostilities. The theological faculty, or at least, the principal members of it, protested against his coming, as being notoriously of different views and feelings from themselves, and as

having already pronounced sentence against them before a public assembly in London. He came, nevertheless; and the amiableness of his manners, combined with his uncommon and unquestioned talents and learning, served in no long time to wear away the violent prejudices which had existed against him. The year from the spring of 1828 to that of 1829, he spent in Rome; and then returned to his duties with increased vigour and influence. The difficulties which occurred in Halle the last winter, although neither occasioned nor promoted by himself, turned for a time the popular current against him; but the excitement has, probably, ere this time subsided, and we may securely trust that God will here, as every where, overrule all apparent evil for good. In person, Professor Tholuck is slender and feeble; his conversation is uncommonly engaging and full of thought; and although not yet 36 years old, he possesses a greater personal influence and reputation than any other theologian of Germany. To an American Christian who travels on this part of the continent, Tholuck is undoubtedly the most interesting person whose acquaintance he will make.

"Gesenius is already so well known in this country, that a short notice of him may suffice here. He is also an instance of great precocity in learning; the first edition of his Hebrew Lexicon having been published before the age of twenty-four, his larger Hebrew Grammar at twenty-seven, and his Commentary on Isaiah, which placed him in the first rank of biblical critics, before thirty-two. His manners have more of the gentleman and man of the world, than is usual with German professors; and a stranger who should meet him in society, would never suspect that he was a laborious and eminently distinguished philologist; much less the first Hebrew scholar of the age. He has now been several years employed upon his *Thesaurus* of the Hebrew language, and has in the meantime published three editions of his Manual Hebrew Lexicon, the first of which was translated several years since by Mr. Gibbs. He is now occupied with an edition of the manual lexicon in Latin, which is to be completed in the coming spring; and is at the same time making preparations for the more rapid completion of the *Thesaurus*, the first part of which was published in 1828. Thilo, the son-in-law of Knapp, is highly esteemed as a lecturer on ecclesiastical history and exegesis of the New Testament. Wegscheider is sufficiently known as the standard bearer of rationalism in its lowest forms. Ullman, formerly at Heidelberg, has a good reputation in

ecclesiastical history, and is one of the editors of the 'Theologische Studien.' Rödiger, a private teacher, is a fine oriental scholar, and superintends the publication of Freytag's Arabic lexicon. He has also recently published an edition of Lockman's fables, with a corrected Arabic text and glossary, for the use of beginners in that difficult language.

"In the faculty of law, the names of Mühlenbruch and Blume are advantageously known; and as a comparative anatomist, Meckel takes rank of all others in Germany. His collection, founded by his father and augmented by himself, is the best private collection in that country, if not in the world. In the philosophical faculty the aged Schütz, Gruber, Leo, Bernhardt, and others, have a high reputation.

"The number of students has been increasing for several years. In 1829, there were 1330; among whom were 944 students of theology, 239 of law, 58 of medicine, and 89 in the philosophical faculty. The average cost of residence here is from 200 to 250 rix dollars per annum. The library contains over 40,000 volumes, and occupies a building by itself. The king has also granted 40,000 rix dollars (about £5,950) for the erection of an edifice for the university; but the foundations are not yet laid.

"The theological seminary in this university has five classes, viz. in the Old Testament with Gesenius; in the New with Wegscheider; in systematic theology with Tholuck or Weber; in ecclesiastical history with Thilo; and in *Homiletik* with Marks. The philological seminary, formerly under Reisig, is now directed by Schütz and Meier."

We shall now lay before our readers the state of the more recently founded university of Berlin, in Prussia; a university which promises to effect much more for the advancement of true religion.

"BERLIN. This university, although it went into operation only in 1810, has already taken the first rank among the literary institutions of Germany. Situated in the midst of a large and splendid capital, amid a population of 220,000 souls, and supported by the whole influence of a powerful court and government, it has of course had comparatively few obstacles to struggle with. It is located in an immense building, formerly the palace of Prince Henry, the brother of the great Frederic, in the midst of the most fashionable and splendid part of the city. The building is sufficiently large to accommodate the collections in anatomy, natural history, &c. besides furnishing lecture-rooms for the use of all the professors in their turn.

This edifice gives a strong impression of convenience and utility; and it was a thought of thrilling interest, when sitting among three or four hundred pupils, who were drinking in the instructions and the pure spirit of the Gospel from the lips of Neander, to compare its present destination with its former character, when the voice of mirth and revelry resounded through its halls, 'and the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine were in their feasts; but they regarded not the work of of the Lord.'

"It has ever been a favourite endeavour of the King of Prussia, to collect in his university at Berlin the ablest men of the whole country. In this he has not been unsuccessful. The faculties of law and of medicine at present decidedly take rank of all others in Germany; while the philosophical one is in no degree inferior to any other. The theological faculty is abler and more fully attended than any other, except at Halle. This arises in general not from the greater ability of the professors at Halle; except so far as Hebrew literature is concerned, where Gesenius incontrovertibly takes the first rank; but from two other causes, viz. first, that a very great proportion of the theological students are poor, and Halle is in itself a cheaper place than Berlin, besides having a multitude of stipends and free tables; and, secondly, that Halle is the favourite resort of almost all the followers of rationalism, who at the present day constitute a very large class among the theological students. Berlin, both as a city and a university, has a decided preponderance to evangelical religion, and may be regarded as one of the strongholds of faith and true piety in Germany.

"The theological department contains the names of Strauss, the most popular and eloquent of the court preachers, who lectures on *Homiletik* or practical theology; Marheinecke, who teaches *Dogmatik* or systematic theology, and who is a disciple of Hegel and verges towards pantheism; Schleiermacher, a man of great simplicity of manners and one of the deepest thinkers of the day, who wanders at will over the whole field of theology. He has a system of his own, and has many followers. He seems to stand between the rationalists and the evangelical party, being, however, more distant from the former than from the latter. It was related to the writer by Harms of Kiel, that he himself and several of his acquaintances, had been brought off from rationalism by the logic of Schleiermacher; but not being able to rest in the position which he had taken, they had gone forward to embrace the evangelical doctrines. Neander is the first ecclesiastical historian of the

age, and one of the best, if not quite the best, exegetical lecturer on the New Testament in Germany. His great work on the history of the church is advancing, but with slow progress. Hengstenberg is still quite a young man, and early distinguished himself as an Arabic scholar at Bonn, where he was the editor of the *Moallakat of Amrulkeis*. At present he is engaged in a work entitled "Christology of the Old Testament," which treats of the predictions respecting the Messiah under the ancient dispensation. The first volume was published in 1829. He is also the editor of the *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*, a work which has done good, although it is generally regarded as too intolerant in its spirit. De Wette was formerly a member of this faculty, but was cut off in 1819 by the king, on the ground of his having written a letter of condolence to the mother of Sands, the murderer of Kotzebue. The general opinion, however, is, that this only served as a pretext for his dismissal; and so little weight did there seem to be in the charge, under the existing circumstances, that the whole university as a body petitioned, but in vain, for a recal of the decree. As a jurist, the name of von Savigny stands pre-eminent in Germany; in the medical faculty are the names of von Graefe, Hufeland, Busch, and others. In the various departments of the philosophical faculty, are Hegel, the present prince of metaphysical philosophers in the North of Germany; Encke, the astronomer, who reads lectures as a member of the Academy of Sciences; von Haumer, the historian; Charles Ritter, the celebrated geographer, a pious and most amiable man; Bekker, the indefatigable editor of Greek and Roman classics; Böckh, the Greek philologist and editor of Pindar; Zumpt, the Latin grammarian; Bopp, the Sanscrit scholar; and a host of others. The whole number of the instructors is usually more than a hundred.

"The number of students at Berlin, in the winter of 1829-30, was somewhat over 1800. In the winter of 1826-27, the number was 1732; in the summer following it was 1594. These last were divided as follows:—in theology 497; in law 577; in medicine 333; and in the philosophical faculty 206. The relative numbers at present probably do not vary much from the same proportion. The cost to a student of living here may be estimated at 300 rix dollars (about £44) a year; varying of course according to the habits of economy or expense of each individual. The students of Berlin, as has been above remarked, do not form a distinct and separate body as in the smaller cities, but are lost in the crowd; and the consequence

is, that there is about them little or nothing of that peculiar character, which German students are usually represented as possessing. Generally speaking too, they may be regarded as a higher class of young men, than those who frequent most of the other universities, with the exception of Göttingen. Their dress and appearance are generally more respectable.

"The university, as such, has no separate library; but has the full use of the royal library, which occupies a splendid building of its own across the street from the university. It contains 180,000 volumes, and 7,000 manuscripts, and ranks in Germany next after the libraries of Munich, Göttingen, Vienna, and Dresden. It is open for consultation every week day, two hours in winter, and three hours in summer. Books may be taken out twice a week. All the students have the privilege of taking out books under the *cavet* of a professor. There is also an extensive botanical garden, formally under the care of the celebrated Willdenow.

"In all the six universities of Prussia, viz., Berlin, Bonn, Breslau, Greifswalde, Halle and Königsberg, the government have established what are called a *theological* and a *philological seminary*, or societies among the students, under the guidance of a professor, for the more extensive study of these branches. There are usually from ten to fifteen ordinary members, who are admitted on examination, after having been a year at the university, and are bound to attend the meetings and take part in the exercises: these enjoy some slight privileges and stipends, and are in the way of favourable notice from the government. In Berlin, during the last winter, there were exercises of this kind in the exegesis of the Old Testament under Hengstenberg, and in the history of the church and of doctrines under Neander and Marheinecke. The philological seminary is under the care of Böckh. Similar institutions exist also in most of the universities of other states."

Such are two of the principal German universities. Germany proper possesses nineteen universities, with upwards of 15,000 students. We have been often asked, how it is that such numbers of young men flock to the seats of learning, and receive a regular collegiate education. Several reasons have been assigned. To one of them, not the least powerful we have alluded in our introductory observations. But the greatest attraction to a German university remains to be noticed. The secret both of numbers and emulation is to be found in the despotic patronage of the governments. "The sovereigns of Germany," to use the language of Professor Robinson, "universally

hold the power in their hands ; and there is not a place of honour or profit, from the minister of state down to the petty schoolmaster of a village, which is not directly or indirectly dependent on the government. Every lawyer is one only so far as he is connected with the courts of justice, as an officer of lower or higher rank and name ; every physician is one only so far as he has the license and the sanction of the proper department ; the church itself is but the slave of the civil power, and must do all its bidding. No man can devote himself to the service of his divine Master, and proclaim salvation to the perishing souls of his fellow-men, but in the way which the government directs. *Were he to attempt it without having yielded obedience to the prescribed formalities, there is not a spot in Germany where imprisonment or banishment would not be his lot.* The government mixes itself in every thing, prescribes every thing, will know every thing, and prohibits every thing which does not strictly coincide with its own interests and will.

“ In this system of things, the universities act a conspicuous and necessary part. They have been established and are supported by the governments, as seminaries to train up and qualify young men for the offices of church and state—those offices *which the governments alone can give, and which, as a universal rule, they give only to such as have received a university education.* No one is permitted *even to ask for an office in the state, or a station in the church,* or for employment in the courts, or for practice as a physician, unless he has been at a university. This is a *sine qua non*, a previous question, which if answered in the negative precludes all other questions. The only exceptions are in the case of village schoolmasters, and the department of mines ; for both of which there are special seminaries, which take the place of a university course. The universities, then, are interwoven with the very system of government ; they form an essential feature in its policy, and from the very nature of their relation to it, they must for ever remain under its immediate control. They are not independent literary institutions, at which only those who please may drink of the waters of knowledge at the fountain ; but they are the creatures of the government, to which all those who will get their bread in a professional calling, must resort.”

In another paper we shall trace the progress of the Germans in general and sacred literature, reserving the subject of theology for a third notice.

WHAT IS A REVIVAL?

“O Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known : in wrath remember mercy.”—Hab. iii. 2.

THAT there have been such things as revivals in the church, few sincere Christians question. What happened once may happen again. Why, then, such scepticism about American revivals? Because it is said by some, we inquire not at present from what motives or on what grounds, that they are spurious. Of one thing, at least, we are quite certain, that very many have pronounced sentence in a dictatorial manner against American revivals in the gross, without possessing any accurate knowledge of what a revival in religion is. If there are any such among the readers of the *Freeman*, let us entreat their attention to a few simple statements to enable them to form an unprejudiced and impartial judgment.

A revival of religion supposes a previous declension; such as was, alas! so very common among the Israelites, and such as may be expected frequently to occur in the Christian church, on account of man's sluggishness, and the very many causes which turn the minds of men away from religion, and oppose the influence of the Gospel.

There is nothing miraculous in a revival, according to the common acceptation of the term—the established laws, both of matter and mind, remain in full force. It is the natural result of the right use of right means. In a revival, as well as in the ordinary course of conversion and sanctification, effects are produced by the instrumentality of the truth of God. This truth, it is true, cannot of itself effect any thing; without the omnipotent influence of the Holy Spirit, it is utterly powerless; but in his hand it is as the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces—it is a sharp two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The truth cannot of itself convert or sanctify more than the grain sown can produce a harvest, but still the truth is to the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory of God, what the seed sown is to the luxuriant harvest. In a revival, as well as in the ordinary progress of the work of grace, it is God that worketh both to will and to do of his good pleasure, but he works by the use of means; and the connexion between effects and their causes is according to the rules of the strictest

philosophy. A revival, therefore, is no product of superstition or fanaticism; it is, by God's blessing, the legitimate effect of his own means employed in his own way.

In a revival the church herself is convinced of sin. Some attach to a revival merely the idea of converts added in large numbers to the church, but this is only a part; the fountains of sin are broken up in the souls of the church's own members; a genuine revival includes an awakening to new life of those who have already given their hearts to the Saviour.

That does not deserve the name of a revival, in which back-slidden Christians are not brought to repentance and led to begin anew obedience to God. It is essential to its existence also, that Christians should have their faith renewed, so as to see the truth of God standing boldly, and prominently, and practically before them in all its overwhelming reality. Such a renewal of faith renews their love; and in the exercise of love to God and to man, they go forth with unwonted zeal and energy, to work for the salvation of souls. In the exercise of a strong renewed love to men, Christians in a revival travail, as in birth, till Christ is formed in the hearts of those dear to them; and while they beseech and entreat these friends, and all within their reach, to be reconciled to God they carry them in the arms of a strong faith before the throne of his grace, and in fervent effectual prayer seek for the saving influences of his Spirit upon them.

A revival, as has been written by a master hand, breaks the power of the world and of sin in Christians. It brings them to such vantage ground, that they get a fresh impulse towards heaven. They have a new foretaste of heaven, and new desires after union to God. The charm of the world is broken, and the power of sin overcome. When the churches are thus awakened and reproved, the reformation and salvation of sinners will follow, going through the same stages of conviction, repentance, and reformation. Their hearts are broken down and changed. Very often the most abandoned profligates are among the subjects. Harlots, and drunkards, and infidels, and all sorts of abandoned characters are awakened and converted. The worst part of human society are softened and reclaimed, and made to appear as lovely specimens of the beauty of holiness. Is there any thing in all this irrational or unscriptural? Is there any portion of it that can be sneered at or denied by any man who has entered into the spirit of the motto of sacred writ prefixed to this article, or who believes the declaration of God's Spirit respecting the Corinthians? "Such were some of

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you (fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners), but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God." Yet such is a revival, on whatever part of the church or the world, by the blessing of God, it may come. "O Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known: in wrath remember mercy."

LEVITY OF CHRISTIANS.

It is impossible for the Christian to make rapid advances in the divine life, while he indulges a spirit of levity. Such a spirit cannot have a dwelling-place, when the soul is fixed supremely upon heavenly things. There is no concord between the holy, solemn, sacred, and spiritual feelings of the Christian, when his heart is richly imbued with divine influence, and the light and giddy feelings produced by an influence which is not from heaven. Let the Christian enter his closet, and there with a broken heart bemoan his sin; let him gain near access to God, discover new excellencies in the divine character, see new reasons for a life of holy obedience, and realize with uncommon clearness the eternal truth of the Bible; and as he rises from his knees, does he feel disposed to mingle in jesting and sportive company, or join in their frivolous conversation? Far from it. A sacred solemnity pervades his soul. He fears to sin. He realizes more than ever the propriety of saying, What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? The Christian of a heavenly mind is prepared to contemplate with seriousness, serious subjects. But it is not so with him who is controlled by a light and trifling spirit. The one can look up to God in prayer, with some degree of preparation of heart; but the other is better prepared to commune with those of a kindred spirit, than with a holy God.

THE DESERTED FAMILY ALTAR.

It was once erected. How many solemn and interesting reflections are connected with that fact! What does it imply? The man once felt the power of truth—once stood in solemn awe of God—once so felt the worth of his own soul and the souls of his family, that he must commend them all to God in

daily prayer. And his household must hear his intercessions. He would overcome every obstacle that had lain in his way. How pleasant that thought! It was an house of prayer. Those walls resounded with the praises of Israel's God. The loving-kindness of the Lord was mentioned every morning, and his faithfulness every night.

There *was* an altar there. *Was!* Strange thoughts arise upon the use of this word. Is that altar overthrown? Has the voice of prayer ceased there? Must that dwelling be reckoned once more among those where no incense is offered to him that sitteth on the throne?

But why did he not pray on? Had he and his household received all the mercies they needed from the Hearer of prayer? Had he filled the full measure of divine requirement? Was his last prayer in his family the only remaining drop necessary to fill the cup of obligation, so that nothing more was due his Maker? Had God lost any measure of his worth, so that homage was no longer deserved?

But why did he not pray on? Did the voice of persecution restrain him? Was it penal and dangerous to make his prayer unto his God? Did he desire ardently to go on, but was restrained by threatened evil?

Why did he not pray on? He might have done it. No reasons like those mentioned existed to prevent it. He ought to have done it. Every motive that constrained his first prayer, blazed as brightly before him as ever. He had as many wants. He had as many dangers. He had as many reasons for prayer, and as many for praise.

But in spite of all, the altar is overthrown! The morning comes—the evening comes, but there is no prayer! God is faithful every day, and faithful every night; but there is no prayer! The business, cares, pleasures of the day are regularly succeeded by quietness and security through the “silent watches,” but God is not acknowledged. The months fly by. The years revolve. The desolate altar is desolate still.

The judgment comes, and before the awful bar stands a family that “called not upon thy name!”—*Boston Recorder.*

INGENIOUS REBUKE.

A GENERAL officer, who was early in life much addicted to profane oaths, dated his reformation from a memorable check he received from a Scottish clergyman. When he was lieuten-

ant, and settled at Newcastle, he got involved in a brawl with some of the lowest class in the public street; and the altercation was carried on by both parties, with abundance of impious language. The clergyman passing by, shocked with the profanity, and stepping into the crowd with his cane uplifted, thus addressed one of the leaders of the rabble:—"Oh, John, John! what is this I hear? you only a poor collier boy, and swearing like any lord in the land. Oh, John, have you no fear of what will become of you? It may do very well for this gallant gentleman (pointing to the Lieutenant,) to bang and swear as he pleases, but you—you John! it is not for you or the like of you, to take in vain the name of him in whom ye live and have your being." Then turning to the Lieutenant, he continued, "You'll excuse the poor man, Sir, for he is an ignorant body, and kens nae better." The young officer shrunk away in confusion, unable to make any reply. Next day, he waited on the minister, and thanked him sincerely for his well-timed reproof, and was ever after an example of correctness of language.

CLASS OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM,

In Connexion with the Presbyterian Secession Church.

It is gratifying to find among Irish Presbyterians a determination to secure, in the candidates for the sacred ministry, a more thorough acquaintance with the Bible in the original languages. Without banishing human learning, or even lessening the amount of it possessed by the public teachers of Christianity, it may be safely affirmed that, in ministerial education, sufficient attention has not hitherto been bestowed on the fountain of divine knowledge—the Book of Revelation. There are in the community enthusiasts, who, out of the depths of their stupidity, denounce all learning and philosophy as not only unnecessary, but hostile to the interests of "pure and undefiled religion." The Bible, the Bible! they exclaim, accompanied with the teaching of the Spirit of God, is abundantly adequate to the enlightenment of both pastor and people. Fools and blind! They do not reflect, that for every *doctrine*, and *sentiment*, and *word* of Scripture which they know, they are indebted to that very learning on which they would ignorantly pour contempt. Where were the pittance of knowledge which these miserable ingrates possess, even of divine revelation, had not men of extensive erudition and deep research trans-

lated the Scriptures out of the Hebrew and Greek originals? What is our English Bible? Is it not a splendid monument to the value of learning, while those who decry learning would wrest its sacred page to their degrading purposes? We are all indebted to learning, and it is a sorry specimen of honesty, when we begin to abuse our creditor instead of making prompt payment. But such Goth and Vandal views have no place among the Presbyterians of Ulster. They are opposed alike to the principles, and feelings, and objects, of the Secession Church.

The education of young men for the ministry, as it regards both literary and religious qualifications, promises to be eminently advanced by the establishment of classes for Biblical Criticism. The Greek and Latin classics are studied with some attention in our schools and colleges; and such a foundation is in many instances laid, as presents to industry and perseverance the prospect of a goodly superstructure. In Hebrew, the acquirements of our students are generally more limited. The greater number do not read any considerable portion of the Scriptures in this language; and, what is still less promising, few take pains to make themselves soundly acquainted with its grammatical structure and idiomatic peculiarities. Still the greatest evil, as fathers and brethren in the church have often admitted and deplored, consists in the neglect of improvement subsequently to the period of ordination. The curriculum of study ended, the aspirant after learning, now burdened with the onerous duties of a congregation, has little time, and evinces less disposition, to pursue a course of literary distinction. Instead of advancing, we have, therefore, to confess that we retrograde, not only in the path of science, but in those departments which are necessarily and immediately connected with the effective discharge of ministerial duty.

What is the reason for the acknowledged falling away, during after-life, in these departments of knowledge which bear directly on the interpretation of the word of God? We have thought of the subject, and we believe the reason to be simply this—a certain amount of knowledge in Greek classics and in Hebrew is attained, but the system of education does not teach the distinct application of this knowledge in ascertaining the meaning of Scripture. Were the practical utility of even the little Hebrew which is usually learned, understood and appreciated, we should more frequently and assiduously cultivate the companionship of the Hebrew Bible; and a similar practice in regard to Greek would engage us more eagerly in

the study of the Greek Testament. It is merely requisite to make us feel the positive advantage of studying the original, in order to secure our progress in these useful and delightful walks of sacred literature. Now we humbly conceive that this application it is the province of the Professor of Biblical Criticism to point out, with a view to cultivate the taste, and induce the practice which depend on the recognition of its importance.

In the class for Biblical Criticism, recently established by the Synod, it will be desirable to exhibit a comprehensive view of the topics which are engaged in determining historically and critically the sacred text, with a statement and exposition of the leading laws of interpretation. Such a course necessarily contains much dry detail; but, in this case, the nature of the field will enable him who cultivates it judiciously, to render his labours at once interesting and instructive. For the student who would duly qualify himself as a public teacher of religion, Biblical literature possesses many charms. It will trace for him the account of many remarkable circumstances connected with the preservation and transmission of the sacred oracles—it will present him with the history of manuscripts, determining their respective *ages*, classifying them according to their different *families*, and ascertaining the character and authority to which they can severally lay claim—it will deduce from these, and many kindred topics, principles and rules enabling him to fix satisfactorily what are the *words of inspiration* generally, and what is the *correct reading of disputed passages* in particular—it will instruct him rightly to estimate the swarms of various readings which a patient and painstaking collation of numerous manuscripts has in modern times brought to light. In addition to this, it will bring him acquainted with the various editions of the Scriptures, which embody the results of much learned labour, while he must be taught neither to despise on the one hand, nor on the other to follow slavishly the decisions of high authorities. Through the whole range of such investigations, at which we have merely glanced—at every step, both teacher and student must remember and act upon the divine motto—“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

It is one thing to possess a correct text of any book, and quite another thing to be able to adduce satisfactory evidence of its correctness. The former is an acquisition which we may reach through the exertions of others, without the slightest effort on our own part; to the latter we must forever remain strangers without diligent and persevering industry. And

though multitudes must necessarily receive the bare products of literary investigation upon trust, surely the minister of the Gospel who would go forth in the full equipment of his office, should not enrol his name among these multitudes. He will seek not only to know, but to be capable of proving, that the sacred oracles have been transmitted to us in their genuine purity, and the attainment of this object will contribute alike to the comfort and the cultivation of his mind. Indeed the advancement of the age, in all kinds of knowledge, both useful and ornamental, demands this at the hands of Gospel ministers; and as in all similar cases where mental improvement is concerned, they are exhibiting a forward preparedness to meet the demand.

Suppose, then, that the multitudinous topics of an external nature, affecting the settlement of the *text*, are satisfactorily disposed of, and that we have accomplished such an adjustment of *various readings*, and of other elements entering into the question, as enables us to say, from enlightened conviction, "This book is as near as possible to the state in which it proceeded from the inspired penmen;" what an extensive field for critical labour is discovered to our view. Our attention has hitherto been occupied with what is in reality of a preliminary character. We have simply enclosed the farm, and fenced it round; we must now prepare for its cultivation. The critic has employed his powers to some purpose, in fixing the exact subject on which they shall in future be exercised. The equation has been cleared of fractions and surds, by way of preparing for its solution. Having pursued the path of Biblical criticism thus far, the student has ascertained what is Scripture, and he thenceforth will gird himself to the task of removing the difficulties which lie between *his* mind and *its* meaning.

The simple question, What is the signification of a single word? has sometimes given rise to interminable disquisitions. In the Scriptures, as in any other book, much depends on the *ordinary acceptance* of certain terms, as well as on the *sense* in which they are employed in particular passages. This naturally involves the question of Hebrew or Greek usage, as the case may be; and some learning, as well as much critical acumen, may be requisite to arrive at a conclusion clear of the mists of dubiety. Here the attainments of the sound philologist are laid under contribution; nor will his attainments secure the object, if he prove himself to be a mere sciolist in the philosophy of language. Unacquainted with the laws of human thought, as they influence human language, the

Biblical, or any other critic, will make wild work of it, when he handles the very first principles of *verbal* interpretation. The word-department in criticism is of unlimited extent, as any one may perceive by looking into the common treatises on the subject. See, for example, the volumes of Bishop Horsley; or Middleton's consummately acute work on the Greek Article—the *loquacissimæ gentis flabellum*, as it is termed by Julius Cæsar Scaliger. The meaning of words taken separately, is a primary consideration in ascertaining the meaning of a document; and, accordingly, it should be the object of the lecturer to lay down sound principles which may regulate his own investigations and those of the students. The subject being so extensive, without such principles mountain masses of learning may be accumulated; citations piled on citations up to the very heaven of folly; but little substantial good will be effected. The standard Hebrew and Greek Lexicons, and other works of the German *literati*, furnish deplorable evidence of the evils inseparable from the want of what we shall take the liberty of designating *sound common sense* in the explanation of words.

Having attended to the meanings of words regarded separately, the student is prepared for viewing them in a state of combination. Here a variety of new considerations is introduced; such as the sense which peculiar usage assigns to a term, the modifying power which one term exerts upon another, the tropical applications of words in certain localities, the nature of symbolic language, &c. &c. There are difficulties, no doubt, attending the successful discussion of such topics. But the sources of elucidation are innumerable; and when fancy is not substituted for judgment, the cultivation of this branch of the criticism of the Bible will tell favourably on mental habit and ministerial respectability. Reference must be had to cognate languages and translations, as they elucidate words taken singly and in combination,—to the peculiarities of Eastern manners and customs, with the changes which they may, at different periods, have undergone,—and, above all, to the modes of thinking which in such cases are partly the cause, and partly the effect of external revolutions.

There are various other points which call for notice, but, for the present, we must content ourselves with throwing out the above hints to the candid consideration of all who feel desirous to introduce among us a fuller acquaintance with the interesting and useful disclosures of Biblical literature.

We have referred to the German critics and philologists in terms of disapprobation. We are far from undervaluing their

labours; but far as they have advanced on the path of literary fame, we take leave to express an opinion not rashly formed, that their claims to superior excellence are greatly overrated. Among the authors of Germany there is no lack of learning, though the learning is often wretchedly misapplied through the influence of false principles of criticism, or the want of principles altogether. Even in the criticism of classical literature, in which Germany ranks highest, it were possible to unplume some of her gaudiest chieftains. We do not now enter on this ground, and therefore we shall merely fortify our opinion with that of Mr. Carson. Speaking of the supreme Divinity of Christ, he makes the following statements:—"What have even the neological Germans accomplished against us? With all their immense learning they have not been able to wrest from us a single inch of territory. Their criticisms are arbitrary, forced, and in the highest degree fantastical. Their learning is boundless, yet their criticism is mere trash. The vast extent of their literary acquirements has overawed British theologians, and given an importance to arguments that are self-evidently false."

We shall close with one or two remarks by the same author, which we would respectfully press on the attention of students and ministers of the Presbyterian Secession church. Speaking of the advocates of the doctrine of the Trinity, Mr. C. observes:—"Criticism is our never-failing ally. Every advance in this science is an accession to our strength. The unlearned Christian can triumphantly vindicate our doctrine from his English Bible; whilst the critic can open up a thousand new sources of evidence in the laws of language—laws which are as fixed as the laws of mind." "Let the friends of Jesus, then, study criticism as a science. It is this that will enable them to triumph; it is this that can give definite meaning to words and phrases in themselves indefinite; it is this that will unravel sophistry, and trace the laws of human thought in human language."

WICLIF.

PRESENTATION TO THE REV. ROBERT WILSON.

[THE following Address and Reply were read at a meeting of the First Presbyterian Secession Congregation, Belfast, convened by public announcement, on Monday, the 4th of July. Such scenes are peculiarly delightful. Their value is not to be estimated by the mere amount of a donation, however liberal and generous. We claim for them a much higher degree of excellence, regarded as the clear indi-

cation of kind and Christian feeling between pastor and people. The members of this congregation have done honour to themselves in the substantial testimony which they have borne to the worth of their minister. Long may the relation existing between them be productive of the fruits of peace and righteousness to the praise of divine grace!—
[EDIT.]

*To the Rev. Robert Wilson, Pastor of the First Secession
Congregation, Berry-street, Belfast.*

SIR,—At a period when your private friends are congratulating you on a most important and happy event in your life, we, the members of your congregation, join with them in expressing our personal regards, and our best wishes for your domestic happiness. At the same time we embrace this opportunity of shewing our esteem for your character as our pastor, and our approbation of the manner in which you have discharged the duties of your office. Even on such an occasion we wish to abstain from the language of flattery, and to remember that we are all engaged in cultivating those gracious dispositions whose praise should not be of men but of God. Yet we deem it proper at once to encourage you amid your arduous and solemn duties, and, at the same time, to impress upon our own minds the value of the privileges we now possess, and the responsibility which attaches to our enjoyment of them, by adverting, in a very cursory manner, to some of the grounds on which our approbation rests.

Ever since you accepted the charge of this congregation, you have been unwearied in the performance of every duty that is incumbent on a faithful minister of the Gospel. We are particularly grateful for your unceasing attention to the afflicted, the sick, and the dying; and for the spiritual consolation which you have administered to many of us amidst our trials and bereavements. You have been most regular in visiting our families, and attending to their religious improvement; while your valuable instructions to the young, both in our houses, and in the classes connected with the congregation, are already producing good effects among those who have been trained by them for the fellowship of the church.

Whilst thus occupied with these laborious duties, your services in the pulpit manifest the most careful preparation, and are conducted in such a manner as at once to awaken devotional feelings, to interest the understanding, and to gratify taste. Your discourses usually contain fine illustrations of

Scripture, which not only explain the meaning, but bring out the spirit and the beauty of the different passages to which our attention is directed. We hope that our familiarity with these illustrations, will cherish among us a taste for the study of the Bible, and make us more sensible to the excellence both of its sentiments and its language. It is gratifying to find that the Synod, of which you are a member, have concurred with us in this estimate of your peculiar talents, by appointing you to the Professorship of Biblical Criticism, in connexion with their Theological Class in the Royal Belfast Institution—an office in which, we hope, you will long continue to be useful to the church at large.

In your discourses, also, you give due prominence to the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, to which this congregation have been uniformly attached, even in times when great indifference concerning them, and consequent ignorance of their true character, were very prevalent in this country. Accordingly, when zeal for the profession of these doctrines has now become more common around us, we are gratified by the skilful manner in which you exhibit them, so as not only to defend them, but to set them in a just and attractive light, which is fitted to remove misconceptions concerning them, and recommend them at once to the understanding and the heart. Your illustrations of them, we conceive, are well calculated to benefit the young, and all those whose minds are opening to serious inquiry concerning the nature and evidence of these most important truths. You likewise take every opportunity of pressing them affectionately on the heart and conscience, by shewing their intrinsic excellence, and their intimate connexion with devotion and with conduct. Deducing from them the most powerful motives to new obedience, you connect them with the whole range of the practical Christian virtues, and inculcate the faithful discharge of the duties of life, by which we may be useful in the present world, and adorn the doctrines of God our Saviour in all things.

In connexion with these excellencies, we approve highly of your studious habits and your attention to literary pursuits, the effects of which we experience in the variety of matter and the polish of manner which appear in your discourses and your writings. We are also pleased with your gentlemanly deportment in society, which renders our religious profession respectable in the eyes of the world; and we wish to encourage you in the interest you take in the public institutions around us, by which you connect general usefulness with ministerial faithfulness.

We beg your acceptance of the accompanying donation of £60, as a confirmation of these expressions of our regard for your character, and of our approbation of your conduct.

MR. WILSON'S REPLY.

To the Members of the First Presbyterian Secession Congregation Belfast.

My dear Christian Friends,—The flattering and eloquent Address which you have now presented, accompanied as it is with a substantial testimony of your approbation and esteem, excites in my bosom feelings of the liveliest gratification. The only circumstance calculated to diminish the pleasure which I enjoy on this interesting occasion, is the deep conviction that, in your sentiments of personal and official regard, you have greatly overrated my moral worth and ministerial usefulness. Influenced by the suggestions of warm and disinterested friendship, you have drawn a picture of my exertions as pastor of your congregation, which, I fear, will be found to betray the colouring of a fond partiality. Be it mine through a life of increasing labour and devotedness to the sacred cause, to deserve the eulogium which your cordial attachment has pronounced, and to follow out the course of pastoral excellence which your Address has so ably and so accurately traced.

In my public ministrations, it has been a leading object with me to assign to the doctrines of the Gospel, as they are set forth in the Standards of our Church, the place and the prominence which they occupy in the sacred oracles, exhibiting them, at the same time, in the light of such illustrations as are amply furnished in the *word* and *works* of Jehovah. The study of the Bible, with the aid of scientific discovery and oriental knowledge, being a source of much satisfaction to myself, I feel most happy in the assurance, that any of the results of such investigation embodied in my public discourses have interested or instructed the people of my charge; and I therefore fervently unite with you in expressing the hope, that our familiarity with these illustrations will cherish among us a taste for the study of Scripture, and make us more sensible to the excellence both of its sentiments and language. Above all, it is my anxiety to hold up the doctrines of the Gospel in their bearing on that godliness which “is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

Your allusion to my care over the religious instruction of the youth of the congregation, and to my attention to the afflicted and the dying, is worthy of a people alive, at least in some degree, to the rich privileges and blessings of Christianity; while the latter topic awakens in my heart mingled associations of pleasure and pain. During the *five* years which have elapsed since the solemnities of my ordination, how many fathers and mothers among you, how many sons and daughters have gone "the way of all the earth!" How powerfully and how frequently have we all been reminded, that here we have no continuing city; while the voice of our heavenly Father has been affectionately encouraging us to seek a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I have witnessed with profound satisfaction, and I bless God for the consolation, that in various instances the hand of bereavement has been laid upon a heart of Christian resignation; and that encouraging evidence has been afforded, that some of the mourners among you have not sorrowed "even as others who have no hope."

The business of ministerial visitation in your families is becoming every day increasingly agreeable to my own feelings, and, I trust, increasingly profitable to all parties. In the commencement of my ministry, you received such visits with the courtesy and respect due to one whom you had *harmoniously invited* "to break among you the bread of life;" at present, in addition to the respect and courtesy of former years, the hand of friendship grasps mine, and the look of unequivocal kindness bids me welcome. Let it be our steady aim and fervent prayer, that such seasons of Christian intercourse may be blessed for the promotion of our mutual improvement.

I feel happy in being able to inform you, with reference to the professorship of Biblical Criticism, to which I was last year appointed by the Presbyterian Secession Synod, that the Joint Boards of the Royal Belfast College have not only acceded to the request of our Synod's Committee, to provide accommodation for the class, but have further, in the handsomest manner, proposed to confer on me the unsolicited honour of a seat in the literary Faculty. The compliment thus intended and paid, I do not assume to myself. I know it is mainly addressed to the Presbyterian Synod of Ireland, which, I doubt not, will duly appreciate the good feeling, on the part of the Joint Boards, by which it has been dictated.

Allow me, in conclusion, to advert to the recent auspicious event in my life, in which a numerous circle of private friends

have already evinced the most gratifying interest; and to assure you, that were any thing wanting to crown the cup of my domestic happiness, it would be supplied by the united congratulations of an attached and generous people. Accept the thanks of a heart full of gratitude, stimulated to renewed effort by your cordial approval, and one from which the memory of your munificent conduct will not soon be obliterated.

I have the honour to be,

Your friend and Pastor,

ROBERT WILSON.

REVIEW.

Wesleyan Methodism and Calvinism Contrasted in the light of Divine Truth, especially on the subjects of Election and the Divine Decrees: A Sermon, by the Rev. James B. Rentoul, Garvagh.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love."—Eph. 1. 4.

MR. RENTOUL commences his discourse with some observations illustrative of the connexion between the decrees of God and his works of Creation and Providence. His object is to direct attention to these works, particularly when they are viewed in the light of Scripture, as unfailing evidence of the existence of God's eternal purposes, and as clearly indicative of the character of such purposes. Thus the fact and the nature of the divine decrees are at once fixed and discovered by the works of Creation and Providence. The author also glances at the certainty with which the doctrine in question can be deduced from the admitted existence of foreknowledge in God. "Things future," he well observes, "are foreknown to God as certain; for they have been in many instances foretold. The entire of Scripture prophecy is proof of this. Now this certainty implies the divine purpose. For if future things are certain, what makes them so? Nothing but the immutable will of him who changes not, could render future events infallibly certain." The reader who wishes to enter fully into this point, will find the argument stated at great length, and the cavils against the Calvinistic doctrine triumphantly set aside in the unanswered treatise on the *Freedom of the Will*, by President Edwards.

Having closed, in the introductory part, a masterly outline of argument on the Divine Decrees, Mr. Rentoul proceeds with the more immediate subject of Election; and, in order to clear the ground, he first notices certain points which do not constitute grounds of difference between Calvinists and Arminians, but which yet are pressed by the latter in the discussion of the question. In this department he makes the following statements, accompanied with suitable illustrations:—

"1. We do not differ regarding the real number of those who shall be eventually saved.

2. Neither do we dispute respecting the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ.

3. We do not differ with them as to the *reason* why sinners are condemned."

In the next division the author

“*Considers more particularly the views of Mr. Wesley and his followers on the subject of Election.*” Taking his account of these views from Mr. Wesley, Mr. Fletcher, and Dr. A. Clarke, he thus comments on them :—

“1. I observe that the very admission made respecting an election of communities to the Gospel, goes far to establish the doctrine of personal election to divine life.

“2. The Scriptures make a decided distinction between an election to Gospel privileges, and an election to divine life.

“3. The Wesleyans allege that *persons* are elected when they believe, or on the condition of their faith.

“4. It is utterly unscriptural to constitute faith and obedience the *condition* of God's electing love.

“5. The Wesleyan view of Election is at variance with the entire outline of Scripture doctrine.

“6. Their view is subversive of the leading tendencies of the Gospel system.”

In his *third* division, the author proposes “*briefly to illustrate the nature of election as taught in Scripture, furnishing, as it does, a contrast to the views examined.*” His leading remarks on this division are as follows :—

“1. God has chosen part of the human family, with the design of applying the blessings of salvation to them, and raising them to eternal life, while he has not formed such a purpose regarding the rest.

“2. His purpose of election was eternal.

“3. This purpose of mercy was made for them with Christ, and through him, as their covenant head and representative.

“4. The object which God had in view in his purpose of mercy, so far as related to the persons chosen, was to make them *holy*.

“5. This purpose of mercy had its origin in the unmerited love of God.” On all these remarks the reader will find in the Sermon much valuable and pertinent illustration.

The *fourth* and last general division embraces “*A few of the objections that are thrown up against this view of the subject.*”

“1. It is objected, that if persons be elected they will be saved, live as they may; and if not, they cannot be saved, do as they will.

“2. It is objected to our view of the subject that it destroys man's *free agency*, and, consequently, his accountability to God.

“3. It is objected, that our view of this subject is at variance with the *sincerity* of God, in offering salvation freely and indiscriminately to all.

“4. It is objected, that it is at variance with the justice and mercy of God.

“5. It is said, by way of objection, that God never made any man to damn him.

“6. Lastly, it is objected, that this is a gloomy system, as it represents but few to be saved.” In handling these objections, the author evinces extensive knowledge of the Scriptures, with much acuteness and discrimination.

The *Conclusion* of the discourse touches on some of the practical tendencies of the doctrine of election, when it is fully and fairly understood.

“1. The doctrine of grace is calculated to excite sinners to a proper use of the means of divine appointment in the hope of salvation.

"2. Let a review of this subject *humble* us in the dust.

"3. Let it excite true believers to gratitude and praise.

"4. Let this subject comfort the true Christian amid all the trials and changes of life.

"Fifth, and lastly, let this subject excite believers to greater holiness of life."

The above analysis will supply our readers with a general idea of Mr. Rentoul's sermon. But duly to appreciate its excellence, they must purchase it for themselves, and we can assure them it will abundantly repay a careful perusal. It contains a great body of Scripture testimony, elucidated by such remarks as are highly creditable to the author's talent and research. We believe it is Mr. Rentoul's first publication, and it certainly augurs well for his usefulness and character, beyond the immediate sphere of his personal ministrations. As a member of the Presbyterian Secession Church, he deserves well of his brethren for the able and temperate advocacy of her doctrines, under circumstances of some difficulty and much provocation. The gentlemanly and Christian spirit displayed throughout the discourse, we regard as above all praise; particularly as we happen to know the *ungentlemanly* and *unchristian* manner in which the author has been assailed by some abettors of Arminianism in his neighbourhood. We rejoice that the Methodist body at large are so far from identifying themselves with the disgraceful conduct of some of their friends about Garvagh, that, as we understand, the Conference issued an express order to some belligerents in that part of the world to desist from their unwise battlings. This is as it should be, and we feel no disposition to brand religious communities with the follies of individual members. In the mean time we warmly recommend the discourse before us both to the friends and enemies of Calvinism; happy that our brother has contended *earnestly*, and we will add, *temperately*, and *successfully*, "for the faith once delivered to the saints."

A JEWISH SYNAGOGUE.

THE elders sit with their faces to the people, and their backs to the Hecall (where the copy of the law is placed), and all the people sit rank before rank, the face of every rank to the back of that before it: so the faces of the people are towards the sanctuary, and the elders, and the ark; and when the minister of the synagogue stands up to prayer, he stands on the ground before the ark, with his face toward the sanctuary, as the rest of the people.—*Thorndike*.

ERRATUM.

In the last number, page 310, line first, for "To release the delinquent with an atonement," read, "To release the delinquent *without* an atonement.